Membership of the 112th Congress: A Profile

Jennifer E. Manning
Information Research Specialist

November 26, 2012

Congressional Research Service
7-5700
www.crs.gov
R41647

CRS Report for Congress
Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress

Summary

This report presents a profile of the membership of the 112th Congress (2011-2012). Statistical information is included on selected characteristics of Members, including data on party affiliation, average age, occupation, education, length of congressional service, religious affiliation, gender, ethnicity, foreign births, and military service.

Currently, in the House of Representatives there are 241 Republicans, 198 Democrats (including 5 Delegates and the Resident Commissioner), and 2 vacant seats. The Senate has 47 Republicans, 51 Democrats, and 2 Independents, who caucus with the Democrats.

The average age of Members of the House at the beginning of the 112th Congress was 56.7 years; and of Senators, 62.2 years. The overwhelming majority of Members have a college education. The dominant professions of Members are public service/politics, business, and law. Protestants collectively constitute the majority religious affiliation of Members. Roman Catholics account for the largest single religious denomination, and numerous other affiliations are represented.

The average length of service for Representatives at the beginning of the 112th Congress was 9.8 years (4.9 terms); for Senators, 11.4 years (1.9 terms).

Ninety-four women serve in the 112th Congress: 77 in the House, including 3 Delegates, and 17 in the Senate. There are 43 African American Members of the House (a record number) and none in the Senate. This House number includes 2 Delegates. There are 31 Hispanic or Latino Members serving: 29 in the House, including 1 Delegate and the Resident Commissioner, and 2 in the Senate. Twelve Members (eight Representatives, two Delegates, and two Senators) are Asian or Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander. The only American Indian (Native American) serves in the House.

The portions of this report covering political party affiliation, gender, ethnicity, and vacant seats will be updated as events warrant. The remainder of the report will not be updated.

Contents

Party Breakdown 1
Age 1
Occupations 2
Education 4
Congressional Service 5
Religion 6
Gender and Ethnicity 6
- Female Members 6
- African American Members 6
- Hispanic Members 7
- Asian Pacific American Members 7
- American Indian Members 7

Foreign Birth 7
Military Service 8

Contacts

Author Contact Information 8
Acknowledgments 8

Congress is composed of 541 individuals from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands.[1] This count assumes that no seat is temporarily vacant.[2]

Since 1789, 12,023 individuals have served in Congress:[3] 10,747 in the House and 1,931 in the Senate.[4] Of these Members, 655 have served in both chambers. These numbers do not include the additional 213 nonvoting Delegates and Resident Commissioners who have served in the House.

The following is a profile of the 112th Congress (2011-2012).[5]

Party Breakdown

In the 112th Congress, the current party alignments are in the House of Representatives, 241 Republicans, 198 Democrats (including 5 Delegates and the Resident Commissioner), and 2 vacant seats. The Senate has 51 Democrats; 2 Independents, who caucus with the Democrats; and 47 Republicans.

Age

The average age of Members of the 112th Congress, although lower than that of the previous Congress, is among the highest of any Congress in recent U.S. history.[6] The average age of Senators at the beginning of the 112th Congress was 62.2 years. This is approximately nine-tenths of a year lower than that of the 111th Congress (63.1 years) but half a year higher than that of Senators in the 110th Congress (61.7 years).

[1] This figure includes 100 Senators, 435 Representatives, 5 Delegates (from the District of Columbia, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands), and 1 Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico.

[2] Currently, there are two House vacancies and no Senate vacancies. For information on all special elections and appointments to fill vacancies in the 112th Congress, refer to "Changes in the Membership of the 112th Congress" at http://www.crs.gov/resources/Pages/Congress_112.aspx. This site is updated whenever there is a change in the membership of the House or Senate.

[3] Information about all individuals who have served in Congress is available in the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, a website maintained by the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate at http://bioguide.congress.gov.

[4] A chronological list of all U.S. Senators in history is available on the Senate website at http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/chronlist.pdf.

[5] Information on the five Delegates and the Resident Commissioner is included where relevant. References to Representatives include information for the 435 Members of the House, but not Delegates or the Resident Commissioner. For background information on the previous Congress, refer to CRS Report R40086, *Membership of the 111th Congress: A Profile*, by Jennifer E. Manning. See also CRS Report RL30378, *African American Members of the United States Congress: 1870-2012*, by Jennifer E. Manning and Colleen J. Shogan; CRS Report RL30261, *Women in the United States Congress: 1917-2012*, by Jennifer E. Manning and Colleen J. Shogan; CRS Report R42365, *Representatives and Senators: Trends in Member Characteristics Since 1945*, coordinated by R. Eric Petersen and CRS Report 97-398, *Asian Pacific Americans in the United States Congress*, by Lorraine H. Tong.

[6] For average ages of Members in each Congress from 1949 to the present, refer to an online feature of the *Wall Street Journal,* "The Capitol's Age Pyramid: A Graying Congress," at http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/CONGRESS_AGES_1009.html. CRS records on the ages of Members of the House begin in 1907, the 60th Congress.

At the beginning of the 112th Congress, the average age of Members of the House, excluding Delegates and the Resident Commissioner, was 56.7 years. This is half a year lower than that of Representatives in the 111th Congress (57.2 years), but four-fifths of a year higher than that of Representatives in the 110th Congress (55.9 years).

At the beginning of the 112th Congress, the average age of new Members of the House, including a Delegate and the Resident Commissioner, was 48.2 years, 1.6 years lower than that of new Members at the beginning of the 111th Congress. The average age of new Senators was 52.1 years, 5 years lower than that of new Senators at the beginning of the 111th Congress.

The U.S. Constitution requires Representatives to be at least 25 years old when they take office. The youngest Representative, as well as youngest Member of Congress, is 31-year-old Aaron Schock (R-IL), born May 28, 1981. The oldest Representative in U.S. history, as well as the oldest current Member of Congress, is Ralph Hall (R-TX), 89, born May 3, 1923.

Senators must be at least 30 years old when they take office. The oldest Senator is Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), 88, born January 23, 1924. The youngest Senator is 41-year-old Mike Lee (R-UT), born June 4, 1971.[7]

Occupations

According to *CQ Today*, in the 112th Congress, law is the dominantly declared profession of Senators, followed by public service/politics, then business; for Representatives, business is first, followed by public service/politics, then law.[8] A closer look at the prior occupations of Members of the House and Senate at the beginning of the 112th Congress, as listed in their *CQ Roll Call Member Profiles*, also shows the following:[9]

- 49 Senators have previous House service;
- 81 educators, employed as teachers, professors, instructors, fundraisers, counselors, administrators, or coaches (68 in the House, 13 in the Senate);
- 2 medical doctors in the Senate, plus 1 veterinarian and 1 ophthalmologist; 15 medical doctors in the House (including 1 Delegate), plus 2 dentists, 1 veterinarian, 1 ophthalmologist, and 1 psychiatrist;[10]

[7] Senator Lee is six days younger than fellow freshman Senator Marco Rubio (born May 28, 1971).

[8] "Demographics of the 112th Congress" *CQ Today*, vol. 46, special "Guide to the New Congress" issue, (November 4, 2010), pp. 14-15. In the overwhelming majority of previous Congresses, business has followed law as the dominant occupation of Members. However, at the beginning of the 112th Congress, 209 Members (181 Representatives, 28 Senators) listed business in their *CQ Roll Call Member Profiles,* edging out the 208 Members (172 Representatives, 36 Senators) who listed public service/politics. Law was listed by 200 Members (148 Representatives, 52 Senators). In the 111th Congress, 215 Members (182 Representatives, 33 Senators) listed their occupation as public service/politics, 203 Members (152 Representatives, 51 Senators) listed law, and 202 Members (175 Representatives, 27 Senators) listed business. Ninety-four (78 Representatives and 16 Senators) listed education as a profession. Members often list more than one profession when surveyed by CQ Roll Call.

[9] *CQ Roll Call Member Profiles*, available on the CQ.com subscription database. The professions listed here are not exhaustive, and are not necessarily the ones practiced by Members immediately prior to entering Congress. Most Members list more than one profession in their *CQ Roll Call Member Profiles*.

[10] For more details on medical professionals serving in the 112th Congress, see Mike Mitka, "Physicians in Congress," *JAMA,* vol. 304, no. 22 (December 2010), p. 2471. This count includes a veterinarian serving in the Senate who (continued...)

- 2 psychologists (both in the House), an optometrist (in the Senate), and 6 nurses (all in the House);
- 5 ordained ministers, all in the House;
- 39 mayors (29 in the House, 10 in the Senate);
- 11 state governors (all in the Senate) and 9 lieutenant governors (3 in the Senate, 6 in the House, including 2 Delegates);
- 10 judges (all in the House), and 26 prosecutors (8 in the Senate, and 18 in the House, including a Delegate), who have served in city, county, state, federal, or military capacities;
- 1 cabinet secretary, 1 secretary of the navy, and 1 ambassador (all in the Senate);
- 263 state or territorial legislators (221 in the House, including 2 Delegates, and 42 in the Senate);[11]
- at least 106 congressional staffers (21 in the Senate, 85 in the House), as well as 9 congressional pages (6 in the House and 3 in the Senate);[12]
- 4 Peace Corps volunteers, all in the House;
- 3 sheriffs and 2 deputy sheriffs, 2 FBI agents, a border patrol agent (all in the House), and a firefighter in the Senate;
- 1 physicist, 1 chemist, 6 engineers, and 1 microbiologist (all in the House);
- 4 radio talk show hosts (2 House, 2 Senate), 3 radio or television broadcasters (all in the House), 6 reporters or journalists (2 in the House, 4 in the Senate), a radio station manager, a public television producer, a sportswriter, and a television commentator (all in the House);
- 7 accountants in the House and 2 in the Senate;
- 4 pilots, all in the House, including a former pilot of Marine One (the President's helicopter), and 1 astronaut, in the Senate;
- 2 screenwriters (1 House, 1 Senate), a comedian, in the Senate, a documentary film maker, also in the Senate, and 2 professional football players, both in the House;
- 17 farmers (15 House, 2 Senate) and 11 ranchers (9 House, 2 Senate);
- 2 almond orchard owners, both in the House, 1 farm manager (a Senator), 1 cattle farm owner (a Senator), 1 vintner (a House Member), and 1 fruit orchard worker (a House Member);
- 7 social workers in the House and 2 in the Senate; and

(...continued)

resigned shortly after the 112th Congress began, with an effective date of May 2011.

[11] National Conference of State Legislators, "Former State Legislators in the 112th Congress" (as of December 14 , 2010), http://www.ncsl.org/documents/statefed/fsl112.pdf, supplemented by data from *CQ Roll Call Member Profiles*.

[12] Michael L. Koempel and Judy Schneider, *Congressional Deskbook*, 5th ed. (Washington: TheCapital.Net, 2007), pp. 206-209, supplemented by data from *CQ Roll Call Member Profiles*.

- 5 current members of the military Reserves (3 House, 2 Senate), and 4 current members of the National Guard (3 House, 1 Senate).

Other occupations listed in the *CQ Roll Call Member Profiles*, although not necessarily the professions practiced immediately before entering Congress, include restaurateur, real estate agent, auctioneer, car dealership owner, construction worker, software engineer, paper mill worker, stockbroker, insurance agent, and funeral home owner.

Education

As has been true in recent Congresses, the vast majority of Members (92% of House Members and 99% of Senators) at the beginning of the 112th Congress held bachelor's degrees.[13] The *CQ Roll Call Member Profiles* indicate that 25 Members of the House and 1 Senator have no educational degree beyond a high school diploma.[14] Seven Members of the House, but no Senators, have associate's degrees as their highest degree, and one House Member has an LPN (nursing) degree. Eighty-three Members of the House and 16 Senators earned a master's degree as their highest educational degree. Law degrees are held by 167 Members of the House (38% of the total House) and 55 Senators (55% of the total Senate). Of the Members holding a law degree, four (three House Members and one Senator) also hold an LLM (Master of Laws) degree. Eighteen Representatives (but no Senators) have doctoral (Ph.D.) degrees, and 20 Members of the House and 4 Senators have a medical degree.[15]

By comparison, 30 years ago in the 96th Congress (1979-1981), at least 48 Members of the House and 7 Senators had no degree beyond a high school diploma. Sixty-seven Representatives and 15 Senators had a master's degree, 17 Representatives and 4 Senators had a doctoral (Ph.D.) degree, and 197 Members of the House and 60 Senators had a law degree.[16] Five Members of the House and one Senator had a medical degree.[17]

Forty years ago, in the 91st Congress (1969-1971), at least 45 Representatives and 9 Senators had no degree beyond a high school diploma. Thirty-seven Representatives and 14 Senators had a master's degree, 7 Representatives and 2 Senators had a doctoral (Ph.D.) degree, 219 Members of the House and 58 Senators had a law degree, and 4 Representatives had a medical degree.[18]

[13] The information in this section of the report includes the Delegates and the Resident Commissioner.

[14] One Representative earned a bachelor's degree in May 2012, during the 112th Congress.

[15] Three Senators, fifteen Representatives, and one Delegate have an M.D. degree; one Representative has a D.O. (doctor of osteopathic medicine) degree; two Representatives have a D.D.S. (doctor of dental surgery) degree; and one Senator and one Representative have a D.V.M. (doctor of veterinary medicine) degree. One Senator has an O.D. (doctor of optometry) degree, and is not included in the count of those with medical degrees. This count includes one Senator with a D.V.M. degree who resigned from Congress after the 112th Congress began.

[16] CRS Report 89-92, *Educational Degrees Attained By Members of Congress, 94th through 101st Congresses*, by Mildred Amer. This report is out of print and available upon request.

[17] This number includes one Senator with a veterinary medicine degree and one Representative with a dental degree.

[18] Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, "Educational Background of Members of Congress," remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 117, part 36 (December 17, 1971), pp. 47696-47697. Senator Eagleton released a study done by educators George S. Reuter Jr. and Helen S. Reuter.

Four Representatives and one Senator in the 112th Congress are graduates of the U.S. Military Academy and two Senators and one Representative are graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy[19]. Two Senators and two Representatives were Rhodes Scholars, three Representatives were Fulbright Scholars, one Representative was a Marshall Scholar, and one Representative was a Truman Scholar.[20]

Congressional Service

The average length of service of Members of the House[21] at the beginning of the 112th Congress was 9.8 years (4.9 terms), slightly shorter than that of the 111th Congress (10.3 years, or 5.15 terms). The average length of service in the 110th Congress was 10.3 years, and for the 109th Congress, 10.1 years.[22] Representative John Dingell (D-MI), the dean of the House, has the longest service of any House Member in history (55 years).[23] He began serving on December 13, 1955.

The average length of service of Members of the Senate[24] at the beginning of the 112th Congress was 11.4 years (1.9 terms), shorter than the 111th Congress beginning average of 13.4 years (2.2 terms). The 112th Congress average is also shorter than that of the 110th Congress (13.1 years), and of the 109th Congress (12.3 years).[25] Senator Daniel K. Inouye, the dean of the Senate, is the second-longest serving Senator in history (48 years). His service began on January 3, 1963.[26]

At the beginning of the 112th Congress, 91 of the Representatives (21% of the total House membership) had first been elected to the House in November 2010, and 15 of the Senators (15% of the total Senate membership) had first been elected to the Senate in November 2010.[27]

[19] This count includes one graduate of the U.S. Military Academy who resigned from the House after the 112th Congress began.

[20] Rhodes and Marshall Scholarships fund study at British universities; Fulbright Scholarships fund international exchange programs; Truman Scholarships fund undergraduate study.

[21] Representatives are elected for two-year terms.

[22] This service does not include Delegates or the Resident Commissioner. For additional information, refer to CRS Report R41545, *Congressional Careers: Service Tenure and Patterns of Member Service, 1789-2011*, by Matthew Eric Glassman and Amber Hope Wilhelm.

[23] CRS Report RL34581, *Members Who Have Served in the U.S. Congress for 30 Years or More*, by Mildred Amer and Clay H. Wellborn.

[24] Senators are elected for six-year terms. Note that 49 Senators in the 112th Congress have previously served in the House.

[25]CRS Report R41545, *Congressional Careers: Service Tenure and Patterns of Member Service, 1789-2011*, by Matthew Eric Glassman and Amber Hope Wilhelm.

[26] Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) served longer (51 years) than any other Senator in history. Senator Byrd, who previously served in the House, also had the longest total service in Congress (57 years) of any Member in history. A list of the longest serving Senators is available on the Senate website at http://www.senate.gov/senators/Biographical/longest_serving.htm.

[27] For additional information about "First-Term" or "Freshmen" Members, refer to CRS Report R41283, *First-Term Members of the House of Representatives and Senate, 64th – 112th Congresses*, by Jennifer E. Manning and R. Eric Petersen.

Religion

Ninety-nine percent of the Members of the 112th Congress cite a specific religious affiliation.[28] The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, which studies the religious affiliation of Members, states, "The 112th Congress, like the U.S. public, is majority Protestant and about a quarter Catholic. Baptists and Methodists are the largest Protestant denomination in the new Congress, just as they are in the country as a whole."[29]

According to statistics gathered by the Pew Forum and CQ Roll Call at the beginning of the 112th Congress, 57% of the Members (248 in the House, 56 in the Senate) are Protestants. Twenty-nine percent of the Members (132 in the House, 24 in the Senate) are Catholic. Seven percent of the Members (27 in the House, 12 in the Senate) are Jewish. Other religious affiliations represented in the 112th Congress include Greek Orthodox, Quaker, Unitarian Universalist, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon). There are also three Buddhists and two Muslims, all serving in the House.[30]

Gender and Ethnicity

Female Members

Ninety-four women (17.4% of the total membership) currently serve in the 112th Congress, three less than at the beginning of the 111th Congress.[31] Seventy-seven, including 3 Delegates, serve in the House and 17 in the Senate. Of the 77 women in the House, 53 are Democrats, including the 3 Delegates, and 24 are Republicans. Of the 17 women serving in the Senate, 12 are Democrats and 5 are Republicans.

African American Members

There are 43 African American Members (7.9% of the total membership, and a record number) in the 112th Congress; all 43 serve in the House, including 2 Delegates.[32] This number includes two

[28] According to information gathered by CQ Roll Call and the Pew Forum, "no Members of Congress say they are unaffiliated. … Only six Members of the 112th Congress (about 1%) do not specify a religious affiliation," The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Faith on the Hill: the Religious Composition of the 112th Congress," http://www.pewforum.org/Government/Faith-on-the-Hill—The-Religious-Composition-of-the-112th-Congress.aspx.

[29] The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Faith on the Hill: the Religious Composition of the 112th Congress," http://www.pewforum.org/Government/Faith-on-the-Hill—The-Religious-Composition-of-the-112th-Congress.aspx

[30] Detailed religious affiliation information for the Members of the 112th Congress (excluding the Delegates and the Resident Commissioner) is available in the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Faith on the Hill: the Religious Composition of the 112th Congress," http://www.pewforum.org/Government/Faith-on-the-Hill—The-Religious-Composition-of-the-112th-Congress.aspx.

[31] Ninety-two women were sworn into the 112th Congress, but two female House Members have since resigned, and four more have arrived in special elections. For more information, see CRS Report RL30261, *Women in the United States Congress: 1917-2012*, by Jennifer E. Manning and Colleen J. Shogan.

[32] Forty-four African Americans were sworn into the 112th Congress; one House Member passed away in March 2012 and was replaced by his son in November 2012, and another resigned in November 2012. For more information, see CRS Report RL30378, *African American Members of the United States Congress: 1870-2012*, by Jennifer E. Manning and Colleen J. Shogan.

Members of the House who are of African American and Asian, or South Asian, ancestry; these Members are counted in both ethnic categories in this report. Forty-two are Democrats, including two Delegates, and two are Republicans. Fifteen African American women, including two Delegates, serve in the House.

Hispanic Members

There are 31 Hispanic or Latino Members in the 112th Congress, 5.7% of the total membership.[33] Twenty-nine serve in the House and two in the Senate. Of the Members of the House, 21 are Democrats (including 1 Delegate and the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico)[34], 8 are Republicans, and 7 are women. There is one male Hispanic Senator from each party. One set of Hispanic Members, Representatives Linda Sánchez and Loretta Sanchez,[35] are sisters.[36]

Asian Pacific American Members

Twelve Members of the 112th Congress (2.2% of the total membership) are of Asian, South Asian, or Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander ancestry. Ten (9 Democrats, 1 Republican) serve in the House,[37] 2 (both Democrats) serve in the Senate. Of those serving in the House, two are Delegates. Four of the Asian Members are female, all in the House.

These numbers include two House Members who are also of African American ancestry, and another of Hispanic ancestry; these Members are counted in both ethnic categories.

American Indian Members

There is one American Indian (Native American) Member of the 112th Congress, who is a Republican Member of the House.

Foreign Birth

Eight Representatives and one Senator (1.7% of the entire 112th Congress) were born outside the United States. Their places of birth include Cuba, Great Britain, India, Japan, Pakistan, Peru, and Canada.[38] Several of these Members were born to American citizens working or serving abroad.

[33] This number includes three Members of the House who are of Portuguese ancestry and belong to the Congressional Hispanic Caucus or the Congressional Hispanic Conference. This number also includes one Member of the House who resigned in August 2012.

[34] This number includes one Delegate who is of Hispanic and Asian ancestry and counted in both ethnic categories.

[35] Both sisters are Democrats from California. Note that Linda Sánchez uses an accent in her last name; her sister Loretta does not.

[36] Note that brothers Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI) and Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI) also serve in the 112th Congress, and Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) serves with his son, Senator Rand Paul (R-KY).

[37] Another Democratic House Member of Asian ancestry resigned in August 2011.

[38] CQ Roll Call, "112th Congress: Birthplaces," http://www.cq.com/members/factfilereport.do?report=mff-birthplaces. This number does not include one Senator born in the Panama Canal Zone; persons who were born in the Zone are legally U.S. citizens. It also does not include one Taiwanese-born Representative who resigned from the House in (continued...)

Military Service

At the beginning of the 112th Congress, there were 118 Members (21.8% of the total membership) who had served or were serving in the military, 2 fewer than at the end of the 111th Congress, and 8 fewer than in the 110th Congress.[39] According to lists compiled by CQ Roll Call, the House currently has 91 veterans (including 1 female Member, as well as 2 Delegates); the Senate has 25. These Members served in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kosovo, as well as during times of peace. Some have served in the Reserves and the National Guard. Three House Members and two Senators are still serving in the Reserves, and three House Members and one Senator are still serving in the National Guard. As noted above, one Senator is a former Secretary of the Navy.

The number of veterans in the 112th Congress reflects the trend of a steady decline in recent decades in the number of Members who have served in the military. For example, there were 298 veterans (240 Representatives, 58 Senators) in the 96th Congress (1979-1981); and 398 veterans (329 Representatives, 69 Senators) in the 91st Congress (1969-1971).

Author Contact Information

Jennifer E. Manning
Information Research Specialist
jmanning@crs.loc.gov, 7-7565

Acknowledgments

Matthew Glassman, Eric Petersen, Erin Hemlin, and Elli Ludwigson provided assistance.

(...continued)

August 2011, but does include one other foreign born Representative who resigned from the House in July 2012.

[39] CQ Roll Call, "112th Congress: House Military Veterans," http://www.cq.com/members/factfilereport.do?report=mff-house-veterans and "112th Congress: Senate Military Veterans," http://www.cq.com/members/factfilereport.do?report=mff-senate-veterans. Both lists were updated July 2012.